

Harvard Allston Task Force
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, May 24th, 2006
Honan-Allston Library
8:15 p.m.

I. Attendance:

Harvard Allston Task Force

Paul Berkeley
Mary Helen Black
John Bruno
Cathy Campbell
John Cusack
Rita DiGesse
Brian Gibbons
Michael Hanlon
Millie Hollum McLaughlin
Bruce Houghton
Brighton Lew
Harry Mattison
Ray Mellone

Boston Redevelopment Authority

Gerald Autler
Linda Kowalcky

Harvard University

Harris Band
Will Donham
Mirtha Garcia
Gary Hammer
Pontus Lindberg
David Lewis
Kevin McCluskey
Andy O'Brien
Dan Rabinovitz
Alison Reinhardt
Russ Porter
Kathy Spiegelman
Maile Takahashi

Gerald Autler called the Task Force meeting to order at approximately 8:15 p.m. upon the completion of the BRA's public meeting to discuss Harvard University's Allston Campus Institutional Master Plan Amendment. John Cusack made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the May 8th Task Force meeting, Brighton Lew seconded the motion, and the Task Force approved the minutes.

Ray invited the Task Force members to share their comments on the public meeting and on Harvard's Institutional Master Plan Notification Form (IMPNF). Cathy Campbell commented that Allston residents don't want Barry's Corner to become the next Harvard Square with activities going on 24/7. She also expressed concern about Harvard's idea to use the first science building as a lecture hall and conference facility. Cathy thinks that conference centers tend to bring in a lot of traffic and asked that this be taken into consideration when planning for the building. Kathy

Spiegelman agreed and said that referring to Barry's Corner as active 24/7 is in reference to creating a city place with activities that create a safe area in both the day and night. Kathy said that Harvard, the BRA, and the Task Force will talk in great lengths about the Science building uses as the design process develops further but she said that the lecture halls for the building won't be like Harvard's Spangler Center and rather will be a much smaller scale.

Cathy said she was hoping that Harvard would conduct research and analysis to try and project what life will be like 50 years from now and to take these projections into consideration for the Master Plan. She suggested that Harvard could use examples of research and projections being done around the world for other projects. Kathy said she doubted that Harvard would be able to satisfy the Task Force's request to provide 50 year projections but said that just because Harvard is required to submit an IMP for 10 years doesn't mean Harvard isn't thinking about impacts beyond a 10-year time frame. Kevin McCluskey agreed and said that part of Harvard's challenge is to discover the changing societal norms.

Mike Hanlon asked Harvard to think about its role and duty to provide policing, EMT, fire services, etc. once the campus begins to develop to ensure that public safety is maintained in the neighborhood.

Bruce Houghton asked if the structure and format of the meetings could be changed. He asked whether meetings could be done without Harvard or the BRA making presentations and if instead community/interest groups could be added to the agenda to share their suggestions for what kind of improvements Harvard could provide for the neighborhood. Bruce said that the Task Force would like to see Harvard demonstrate how it can be a great neighbor.

Paul Berkeley suggested that the Task Force, the BRA, and Harvard hold an Executive Session to prioritize agenda items and to incorporate the suggestions from the Task Force and community members. Paul thought that the Task Force should have more input on developing the meeting agenda items. Mary Helen agreed and thought a meeting should be held soon to brainstorm and prioritize immediate short-term solutions.

Ray shared his comments on Harvard's IMPNF which included the need to address the following issues further in the IMP: transportation improvements and solutions, flooding problems, and urban design principles. Ray asked that a commitment be made that all the issues brought up during the scoping process be remembered for the next project. He expects that the IMP Amendment will be concise and thoroughly connected to the IMP when it is filed.

Pallavi Mande, who was in the audience and is an Urban Restoration Specialist with the Charles River Watershed Association, asked that sustainability principles inform the project at every stage and be incorporated throughout the IMP.

Kathy Spiegelman shared a cake with the Task Force members in honor of Gary Hammer's last Task Force meeting and the conclusion of his work with the Allston Development Group. Gary will be working full time with Harvard's University Planning Office.

The meeting closed at approximately 8:45 p.m.